

Our Young People

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BY AMOS R. WELLS.

LITTLE THINGS THAT CHRIST MAKES GREAT.

I COR. I: 25-29.

A woman was leaving an electric car on Boston's elevated railway and happened to drop a bundle of brass curtain rods. They fell across the track, making a bridge from the track-rail to the power-rail. At once the powerful electric current, with a blinding glare, and a crash like thunder, leaped across the brass rods. Immediately the station was in utmost confusion. Women fainted, and men were wild with excitement. It was some time before workmen could be summoned to end the fusillade and repair the damage.

That is only one illustration, out of a thousand that come under one's eyes every day, of the power of little things for harm. The electricians, when they arrived, merely turned a button on the platform and shut off the current, so that the explosions ceased and they could work in safety. That was an illustration of the power of little things for good.

Now a person who neglects the little things of life must be out of harmony with nature and with God; for the universe, in its mightiest aspects, is made up of little things, and God has bestowed upon them his most loving and earnest thought. The beauty of the landscape is built up from tiny leaves and drops of water and grains of rock. The least gnat shows even more wonderful skill than the vast earth strata.

Among the little things that Christ makes great is a word spoken for him. When Edward Kimball, Moody's Sunday-school teacher, dared to go to the young man in the shoe-store and ask him to give his heart to Christ, he accomplished more by that single word than by all the other words of his life put together.

A prayer is another little thing that Christ makes great. After Moody's wonderful revival in England he found that it had started—or he was convinced that it had—in the prayers of an invalid woman who could attend no meetings, but who at home had a long time been praying for just such a revival.

A human soul is a little thing—there are so many of them! But it is a little thing that Christ, by his infinite sacrifice for it, has made great. A diamond merchant, walking in Birmingham, absent-mindedly tore up and threw away

an envelope containing 1,600 small diamonds. What a search followed, when he discovered his loss! The diamonds were little things, but of great value; and Christ has made the least human soul of more value than all the diamonds in the world.

There are many other little things that Christ makes great. Miss Haver-gal pictures some of them in her beautiful verses:

The memory of a kindly word
For long gone by;
The fragrance of a fading flower
Sent lovingly;
The gleaming of a sudden smile
Or sudden tear;
The warmer pressure of the hand
The tone of cheer;
The hush that means, "I cannot speak,
But I have heard;"
The note that only bears a verse
From God's own Word.
Such tiny things we hardly count
As ministry,
The givers deeming they have shown
Scant sympathy;
But when the heart is over-wrought,
Oh, who can tell
The power of such tiny things
To make it well.



Our Children Who Have Gone Before

BY JOSEPH FOWLER.

What shall we say or think of them? They are no longer here with us—they have passed away and are out of our sight. Do they still live, and if so, shall we ever see them again and know them in the future life? These are questions of the deepest significance, and most earnestly and anxiously asked in every bereaved home where the little life that cheered us with its sweet presence is suddenly taken from us, and the familiar toys, the little dresses and the empty chair, are all that are left to take the place of the loving arms, the innocent prattle and the sweet simplicity of our lost dear ones.

But we may not despair. The same benevolent and all-powerful Being who gave us the sweet-blossom is able to resurrect it and restore it to us. That he will do so we have his promise. Therefore lift up thine eyes and dry thy tears, O mother, and let the golden light of God's love shine into them and brighten them with jewels of heavenly hope! Thy child is safe—not lost, but only gone before. The poet wrote with unerring instinct when he said of the reaper whose name is Death, that as he cut down those opening blossoms,

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

Look at your dead child, and say if the heart, that best of theologians, as Luther calls it, does not indignantly rebel a doubt of its happiness elsewhere? The climbing rose may not have blown on our garden wall, but its hanging chaplets will bloom on the other side! It is but a waste of learned folly for men to speculate on salvation as linked with baptism, or the want of it. God is love, and love cannot be unjust, to punish the guiltless child. There can be no sin where there is no responsibility, and the blood of Christ cleanses the taint of natural corruption from all the innocents!

Nor are we left to natural instinct alone, however unerring. The scriptures clear the matter of all doubt.

When David's child died, the witness as it was to his crime and sin, he consoled himself with the assurance that he would go to it, though it could not come to him. He expected, for himself, as a humble penitent, to enter into God's presence, where there is fullness of joy, and to stand at his right hand, where there are pleasures forevermore, and to see his child there. Was he wrong? "Now he is dead," said he, "wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. And David comforted Bathsheba, his wife." It would have been no consolation had he merely told her that he too must die as well as his son. But there was boundless comfort in such words from the lips of one who anticipated for himself, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." He firmly believed that his child had passed "into a state of grace associate unto the blessed company of the saints in heaven," as an old writer has it. It is as if he had said to Bathsheba, "He is not lost, though no longer with us, but safe in that blessed land whither, through God's good pleasure, I shall one day, and thou with me, rejoin him forever!" There was with him no per- adventure, no doubt. The stricken heart looks upward and sees his child before the face of the great Heavenly Father. No wonder that the quaint and pithy Matthew Henry takes occasion to say from such words, "The promise is to us and to our seed, which shall be performed to those that do not put a bar in their own door, as infants do not."

It is, moreover, of unspeakable moment, in thinking of the company of the redeemed, to remember of what child such a delightful assurance was expressed. If ever a little one might have been expected to be involved in the shame and guilt of its parents, it was that of David. The heartless murder of Uriah, and the equally heartless adultery, had marked its birth with shame. It was, therefore, as a child of godly parents, but simply as a child, that its salvation was a matter of course. Bathsheba seems to have been a willing partner in David's guilt; or, at least, a very simple woman, for she became, twenty years later, the tool of Adonijah, the son of an older wife of David, in his plot to dethrone her own son Solomon. What was thought at the time of David's act may be judged from the fierce hatred of Ahithophel, the grandfather of Bathsheba, at the dishonor shown his family in her person, and at the baseness that planned her husband's murder. Yet the child of such parentage passed, as by a fixed and recognized law of God, from its death-bed to everlasting happiness.

We may be sure that part of the innumerable company of heaven is made up of all who have ever died in childhood, all over the earth, in every age, and from every race. What that means, who can tell? How mighty the atoning power of that blood which from the first has opened the gates of Paradise to such unnumbered millions! How holy and blessed a place must it be where so great a part of the redeemed have never known sin! where the bright innocence of childhood have never been clouded, but has been transfigured into the beauty of angelic purity!

We must not, however, think of children as still remaining in heaven what they were when they left earth.

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In such happy regions their development must make such advances as would have been impossible here.

Not as a child shall we again behold her:

For when, with raptures wild
In our embraces we again unfold her,
She will not be a child;
But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

It is therefore no mere fancy, but we have solid ground, both by intuition and scripture, for believing that our dear lost ones are even now rejoicing as only pure spirits can, in a childhood that knows no tears, under the clear skies of Paradise, with such guardians to watch them as only angels can be who have, themselves, been little children.

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